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DAN SMOOT

Wallace, LeMay, And The War

When General Curtis LeMay became the running mate of Governor George Wallace on the American Independent Party ticket, consternation was apparent among liberals. Wallace himself has been slandered as a racist, bigot, redneck, low demagogue. *The New York Times* — and most of the liberal press which follows the same general line of the *Times* — has come rather close to condemning all of Wallace's supporters (though obviously numbering in millions) as fools, ignoramuses, psychopaths, or emotionally-disturbed hate-mongers.

With characteristic disregard for truth and fair play, liberals have tried to convince the world that no responsible person of repute would identify himself with George Wallace.

Then came Curtis LeMay, the world's most experienced, renowned, and respected commander of long-range bombardment forces; America's outstanding airman; the pioneer of bomber-ferry routes to Europe and the originator and leader of the air warfare tactics used by the Allies in the European theater during World War II; the man who saved literally millions of lives by designing, organizing, and directing the bombing campaign which brought Japan to her knees without a bloody land invasion; the man who organized and commanded the airlift that broke the Soviet blockade of West Berlin in 1948; the man whom President Truman chose to create the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and who, during his nine years as commander, built SAC into a global fleet of nuclear bombers, capable of 24-hour alert and instant retaliation; the man whom President Eisenhower elevated to vice chief of staff of the Air Force and whom President Kennedy promoted to chief of staff.

With LeMay on the Wallace ticket, the liberal line that only fools and nobodies support George Wallace was exposed as false.

What could liberals do about LeMay? Well, they could try to do what they had succeeded in doing to Goldwater in 1964 — make him look like a cross between Attila the Hun and the Mad Bomber, a

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trigger-happy militarist who, with little or no provocation, would plunge the world into nuclear warfare.

They did try. At his first press conference as Wallace's running mate (October 3), LeMay was badgered with questions about whether he would use nuclear weapons in Vietnam. He said:

"I don't advocate using nuclear weapons in Vietnam, because they are not necessary there. We can win in Vietnam with conventional weapons. I would like to see the war settled by negotiations, without the use of any weapons at all. I'd rather talk than fight any day. But I don't think you have to be very smart to realize that the North Vietnamese are not going to talk until we twist their arm a little bit."

"Would you use nuclear weapons if you thought it necessary?" the liberal reporters demanded. "They are not necessary in Vietnam," General LeMay replied.

"But if you thought they *were* necessary?"

With even-tempered calm that disclosed a touch of humor, General LeMay ended the badgering by saying:

"I'll be misquoted. In fact, I'll be damned lucky if I don't come out of this campaign looking like a drooling idiot whose only solution to any problem is to drop atomic bombs all over the world.

"But I'm certainly not going to stand up here and tell our enemies that I would never under any circumstances advocate using our nuclear weapons. We might as well bury them at Ft. Knox.

"If the survival of our nation depended on our using nuclear weapons, of course I would recommend using them. I would recommend anything we could dream up to save our country."

The General *was* misquoted. Richard Nixon, implying that LeMay had advocated use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam, said "I do not think nuclear bombs or nuclear weapons should be used in Vietnam or are needed in Vietnam" — which is exactly what LeMay had said. Then Nixon added what he apparently thought was the clincher:

"We must have civilian control over the military. The military solutions are not always the right solutions to complex situations."

When he was campaigning for, and serving with, General Eisenhower, Nixon never hinted that he feared the election of a soldier would surrender the country to the military.

Nixon revealed his ignorance of the basic American principle governing the relationship between civil and military authority in the United States. General LeMay, like every other professional American soldier worth his salt, is thoroughly committed to the principle that *civil* authority is above military authority. But LeMay (like every other informed person who has given the matter any real thought) objects to the kind of *civilian command of the military* which has been disastrous to American forces in Vietnam — the detailed direction of military operations by untrained, inexperienced civilians, thousands of miles from the scene, sacrificing American lives and equipment on unimportant military objectives, in defiance of the advice of trained military professionals.

Hubert Humphrey's reaction to General LeMay's comments was considerably more dishonest and deplorable than Nixon's. Humphrey said:

"I am shocked and deeply disturbed by General LeMay's statement . . . . Anyone who can speak so lightly about the use of nuclear weapons has no conception of the reality of their terror. It would be disastrous if anyone who spoke as General LeMay did . . . should come into a position of high responsibility. It would be a disaster for this country."

Humphrey overlooks the fact that Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson all gave General LeMay positions of higher responsibility, with regard to the use of nuclear weapons, than LeMay is now seeking as Vice President. He also ignores the fact that LeMay knows infinitely

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more about the horrors of nuclear warfare than Humphrey knows.

Humphrey said:

"I never want to see nuclear weapons used anywhere by anyone — in Vietnam or elsewhere. It would be the height of irresponsibility."

In promising the enemies of this country that he would never use nuclear weapons against them, no matter what they do, Humphrey comes close to committing an act of treason (in the constitutional sense that he gives aid and comfort to our enemies) — precisely the act of treason that LeMay pointedly said he would not commit. Since communist nations greatly outnumber us in manpower and certainly have arsenals of conventional weapons equal to ours, it must give them great comfort to know that, if Humphrey were President, he would not use our best weapons to save the United States, even if communist aggressors decided to attack or destroy us. If we must never use nuclear weapons anywhere under any conditions, as Humphrey says, then why spend billions of tax dollars producing them?

What Humphrey, Nixon, and all other liberals fear about LeMay is his stand with regard to Vietnam. This adds the element that could guarantee the election of George Wallace. Republicans and Democrats have been loftily asserting that since Wallace has had no experience in the federal government, comparable to that of Nixon and Humphrey, he would be incapable of devising a safe and sensible policy with regard to Vietnam. The selection of LeMay as vice presidential candidate proves that Wallace does have a Vietnam policy, which is the only policy that makes sense to the American people. Obviously, Wallace agrees with LeMay's stand on Vietnam. What is that stand?

In 1957, when he was vice chief of staff for the Air Force, General LeMay revealed his abhorrence of nuclear war. He said:

"It is imperative in this age that there be no war, because not even time could erase the scars of a major nuclear conflict."

In *America Is In Danger*, a book published in 1968, LeMay expressed the American professional soldier's typical attitude about war:

"Foreign policy, rather than naked military power, is the key to peace."

"For my money I would stay out of foreign fights unless America's national interests are directly at stake."

Yet, in all his writings and public statements, the General emphasizes that, once in a war (whether it is a small one or a big one, and whatever our reasons are for being in it), we must put all of our national strength and will behind our men on the firing line. Here are passages from an article by LeMay, published in the October 10, 1966, issue of *U.S. News & World Report*:

"Death is final, and drafted boys should not be asked to make this ultimate sacrifice unless their government is behind them 100 per cent . . . .

"Since even small wars are cruel, we must fight them in such a way as to win them as quickly as possible . . . .

"It's a losing game for the stronger side to deliberately drag out a conflict. I thought we learned this lesson in Korea, where we sacrificed some 33,000 Americans for a bogus peace . . . .

"In Korea, where we also pulled our Sunday punch, there were 3.5 million military casualties on both sides during three years of drawn-out war. Over a million civilians were killed, and other millions left homeless in this protracted land struggle. I can't believe this is the most humane way to fight a war . . . .

"We must not try to fight a benign war against an enemy who utilizes terror as a basic tactic. If we take up arms against any enemy, we should hit him hard . . . . This does not mean mass slaughter."

In *America Is In Danger*, LeMay deals at length with the Vietnam war. Here are excerpts from that book:

"Our token bombing has merely given our enemies a chance to develop massive defenses

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around the most critical targets and at the same time shoot down our $2 million fighters as they attack targets which are sometimes not even worth the bombs themselves."

"The sanctuary we have granted to the port of Haiphong is one of the strangest anomalies in the history of warfare. During the past two years, 827 ships have brought munitions and supplies to North Vietnam. Of these ships, 267 were Russian, 258 were Red Chinese, 94 were from Eastern European countries, *and 210 were ships of our alleged allies and foreign aid recipients.* Could this trade have something to do with our granting a King's X to the port? It is a nasty thought, but I have a very hard time rationalizing a strategy that encourages the flow of supplies to enemies who are shooting our servicemen."

"We are fighting with the commodity most precious to us and that which is held rather cheaply by the enemy—the lives of men."

"Resources . . . . are more valuable to [North Vietnam] . . . in many respects than human life."

"We must change the currency in this contest, from men to materials."

"North Vietnam must be made to pay for this war with her dearest coin."

"We must attack the *sources* of supply and the *sources* of power. We must not waste our bombs, our multi-million dollar aircraft, and our precious fighter pilots on bridges, trucks, barracks, and oil drums when major factories, supply dumps, power plants, port facilities, and merchant ships go unscathed . . . ."

"We must make the war so costly to North Vietnam that it will sue for peace."

"We should progressively bomb petroleum facilities, electrical power generators, factories, irrigation systems, transportation centers, and the harbor facilities at Haiphong. There can be little question that either the Ho Chi Minh government would sue for peace, or another government would overthrow Ho and accept the conference table alternative. Leadership of the Viet Cong and the NLF would cease abruptly along with the Viet Cong reinforcement by regular North Vietnamese troops. Viet Cong supplies would dry up. American and South Vietnam troops would then be in a position to mop up whatever diehard Viet Cong insisted on continuing the fight . . . .

"We must aspire to decisive victory . . . .

"America's greatest strength in this military situation is air and naval power. We must use it strategically. We must use it decisively. We must use it now . . . .

"We can pinpoint the targets we will hit and warn the civilians in advance to evacuate . . . ."

"I believe that the course I suggest will end the war much sooner than will the policies we now pursue, with less loss of life on both sides. I am sure it will cost fewer American lives. And those lives are my primary concern."

The Wallace-LeMay team deserves the support of Americans, because Wallace and LeMay stand up for America, putting America and Americans first.

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